



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., orders Navajo flags lowered to half-staff in honor of the late Navajo Code Talker Willie K. Begay

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., today ordered flags on the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff until sundown June 6 in honor of the late Navajo Code Talker Willie K. Begay of Pinon who died Monday. He was 88.

“The late Willie K. Begay was a renowned Navajo Code Talker who served the United States of America, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the Navajo Nation during World War II with courage, honor and distinction,” President Shirley said in a proclamation issued Thursday.

Also today, U.S. Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick issued a statement mourning Mr. Begay’s passing.

“I was deeply saddened by the news that we have lost yet another of the Code Talkers who did so much for this Nation,” she said. “My heart goes out to Mr. Begay’s friends and family.”

She said it was fitting that Willie Begay passed away on Monday, Navajo Nation Memorial Day, a day set aside to

recognize those Diné who sacrificed so much to keep Americans safe.

“We owe him and all those who provided such heroic service a debt of gratitude that cannot be repaid by just one day to honor their memory,” she said.

Mr. Begay served in the 3rd Marine Division Signal Corps from August 10, 1944, to July 5, 1946, and was overseas for 11 months. In recognition of his honorable service to the country, he was awarded the Congressional Silver Medal in 2001.

“The Navajo Nation is greatly saddened by the loss of the late Willie K. Begay,” President Shirley said. “The Navajo Nation unites and offers prayers and deepest condolences to his family during this time of grief.”

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